

# Practical livestock for the homestead

By Amelia Porter

**R**aising livestock is an integral part of the homestead experience. But newcomers often ask me, which livestock should I start with? The answer to that question is a very personal one, but I will say that in a small homestead situation (where space and financial resources may be limited) animals which can provide the greatest diversity with the least amount of feed and supplies are the most practical choice. It is also good to pick animals that will not require a beginner to learn too many new skills, that are inexpensive to set up, easy to handle, and cannot present a danger to your family. Here is a brief overview of a few animals that fit nicely into this category. We'll skip rabbits, an obvious choice, because *BHM* covered them last issue.

**Poultry:** No homestead is complete without some kind of poultry. Chickens, geese, ducks, turkeys, and guineas all offer some measure of diversity with little feed and care. Geese provide the most benefit for the least money, and so I will start with them.

**Geese** provide meat, eggs, down, feathers, and fat. The fat is used not only in lotions & soaps and for cooking, but also makes excellent lamp oil. The feathers can be used for making quill pens, toothpicks, and other small items. The real advantage to geese is that they are classified as a true grazing animal (the only one in the poultry world) which means that 95% of their diet is just plain grass. This makes their feeding and management very simple. Even in winter, geese will dig through the snow to get at the grass, providing the ground is not too frozen to allow for this. They will eat hay when fresh grass is not available, and will also eat grain. The grain is a good

idea if you want maximum production and growth rate out of your geese, but it is not essential. Domestic geese do not fly, so a 30" fence works fine for containment; and they don't scatter when you try and catch them, as other poultry will. They are not as prolific as other poultry, so you do need a pretty fair sized flock if you are raising them for meat, but what they lack in production they make up for in diversity. Not to mention the superior flavor of roast goose - yum!

Geese (like other waterfowl) do not require ponds or creeks as is commonly thought, but do fine with just a bucket of water tied to the fence. Be sure to tie it securely or they will tip it over in their zeal to play in it. Geese have no particular desire for shelter except the occasional shady spot in summer, windbreak in winter, and some secluded place where they can build a nest. The natural vegetation found on most farms provides for this just fine. Unlike most other poultry, geese are not bothered much by small predators such as skunks and raccoons, and only are vulnerable to these when young.

The picture in most people's minds of a loud and angry goose chasing someone or biting them is not as accurate as you might think. Different breeds and strains (bloodlines) of geese are more or less aggressive. The Oriental breeds, such as Chinese and African (recognized by the knobs on their heads), are the most likely to behave in this territorial manner, while the European breeds (no knobs) tend to be quiet, docile, and very polite. Crossbreds between the two categories are often extremely aggressive while crossbreds from within the same category tend to reflect the temperaments of their parents. If you are after very calm geese, I recommend purchasing them from someone who breeds for showing. While mass-pro-

duced commercial geese are bred with no thought given to temperament, geese bred for show are generally bred to be very docile, to put up with being confined in small cages and being handled by the judges during show season. Show-bred geese are also generally larger and have a better meat carcass.

**Chickens and Ducks** are next on my list of suitable poultry. Both of these require more protein than geese, and so need a lot of bugs, meat scraps, or a regular supply of grain in their diet. If you keep your poultry in an enclosed area, where bugs are in short supply, you can place a light bulb or lantern behind some screen at night and your birds will eat the bugs who swarm around the light. Chickens and ducks are both excellent choices for the homestead, providing meat, fat, and eggs. The tip of buying show-bred poultry does apply to all waterfowl (like ducks), but does not apply to chickens. Chickens bred for show are bred for things like feather quality and color, and often their good production qualities are sacrificed in the bargain. When buying chickens, try and find strains which have been bred for hardiness, good feed conversion, and high egg production.

**Chickens** are the trash cans of the poultry world, and will eat almost anything. By this, I don't mean just your garden waste, but the butchering waste, too. Chickens will eat road-kill right down to the bare bones. They will polish off melon rinds, old fruit, stale bread, sour or curdled milk, and anything else you toss their way. They also eat mice and snakes when they can catch them, a quality which some people appreciate. This opportunist's diet has no ill effect on them. In fact, studies have proven that chickens fed on a diet of 25% flies, 50% weeds, and 25% grain produce as many eggs

as chickens raised entirely on commercial feed.

While housing your chickens in a designated building at night does help with predator control and make it convenient to gather the eggs, a building of some sort is not strictly necessary. Chickens can roost relatively safely in trees and will find nesting spots around your yard. Once you discover where they are laying, simply replace the eggs you gather with good quality fake eggs (leave about six fake ones) and they will continue to return to the same nest each day to lay. If the nesting site your chickens have chosen is not convenient for you, simply remove all the eggs each day and they will choose another spot.

If you do opt for an enclosed hen house, there are a few things you should know. First of all, the beauty of a hen house is that chickens are creatures of habit. If you keep them locked up inside the hen house for a few weeks it will become their "home" and they will always return to it to sleep and lay their eggs. After the "training period" you can open the coop door and let them wander all over the farm, foraging bugs, and fertilizing before returning to their little home each evening. The convenience of this arrangement is that their eggs will always be within easy reach and the chickens will not be as vulnerable to predators at night. It also makes things much more simple on those rare occasions when you actually need to do things to your chickens, such as clip their wings or claws (both optional procedures). Chickens can be caught and handled quite easily when they are "roosting" (asleep) at night and so this is the time for such tasks. Trying to catch chickens in the broad daylight is often futile and only serves to stress them out, which reduces egg production.

If you are planning to build a chicken house, I would strongly suggest that you construct it in such a way that the nest boxes and feeders/waterers are accessible from the outside. This

arrangement prevents you from having to walk in all the poop and dust which accumulates at an amazing rate in a chicken house. The nest boxes can be situated at almost any height, but I have found 2 ½ to 4 feet to be a happy compromise between ease of egg gathering and comfort for the chickens. It is Murphy's law that you will always have a few rogue hens who will lay their eggs on the ground, and so it is good to have a solid board of some kind placed directly below the nest boxes, preventing their access to the area directly below the nest boxes.

Your nest boxes should be filled with something that will keep the eggs clean and protectively cushioned. Most people use straw or hay for this purpose, but I have had much better luck using sand. The sand keeps the nest much drier than straw, which in turn keeps the eggs cleaner. It also stays to the bottom better, so there is less chance of breakage. Your chickens do not need to see inside of their nest boxes, and I have found that keeping them a bit dark (by using a fabric door flap) helps to cure egg picking.

A chicken house needs to be designed with plenty of ventilation because chickens are very vulnerable to respiratory ailments when they must breathe stagnant air. Constructing the off-wind side wall completely out of mesh helps a lot with this problem. Chickens are not terribly sensitive to cold, so leaving their house open on one side should not bother them, but in extremely cold climates you may have to take measures against frostbite on their feet and combs.

If you are planning to confine your chickens to an enclosed pen, you will most likely have to clip their wings to teach them not to fly over the top. Even with clipped wings, your fence should be a good six feet high (or more) because chickens fly much better than most people realize. In fact, it is not at all uncommon to see chickens

roosting on the farmhouse roof. Clipping a chickens wings, when properly done, will not harm them and the feathers soon grow back. If you clip both wings as far back as possible (so they can not fly at all) it will teach them that escape attempts are useless and you will probably never have to clip their wings again. Once in awhile, you will get a clever chicken who tests the fence after her wings have grown back. If this happens, catch her quickly and clip her wings again. If you don't do this immediately she will teach the others her mutinous ways and before you know it you will be forced to clip the whole flock on a regular basis. One final note for the beginner: You do not need a rooster to get eggs—the hens will lay them either way. But you *do* need a rooster to get baby chicks. Borrowing a neighbors rooster for about two weeks will provide enough fertile eggs for a nest of baby chicks, but that may incite a few squabbles over pecking order.

**Ducks** are better than chickens when it comes to thriving in horrible weather, and are less vulnerable to predators since they don't roost (or sleep) at night. They are also wonderful year-round egg layers. In fact, egg-bred ducks consistently outperform chickens in this regard—a distinction that few people are aware of. Ducks are not as efficient as chickens at converting feed to meat and eggs, and so are a bit more costly to raise. They are also more messy, but make up for this by being such wonderful natural parents. Since ducks do not roost at night like chickens or herd like geese, catching them can be a real adventure. Requiring them to walk into an enclosed small pen to access some grain each evening is effort well spent when it comes time to grab one. This also is handy when you want to gather their eggs - just shut the gate and leave them there until early afternoon when the eggs have all been laid. Like geese, ducks do not need a body of water to swim in. A simple bucket or

dishpan will meet their requirements, but a child's wading pool will provide them (and you) with hours of amusement. Just be sure and situate it so that it is easy to rinse out and refill, because you will be doing this often.

**Sheep:** Providing perhaps the greatest array of products for the least expense in feed, sheep are an excellent choice for the homestead. They provide meat, bone (buttons, small tools), milk (soap/skincare/paint ingredients/food/beverage), pelts, leather, wool, gut (string), and lanolin (water repellent/skin care ingredient). They also can be trained as beasts of burden for pulling carts and packing small loads. I once saw a full sized carriage being pulled by eight stout sheep. Better yet, the sheep were all wearing hats. Although cattle provide many of the same benefits as sheep, their size, strength, and reproductive limitations make them less practical for the small homestead. In fact, out of all the large meat animals, sheep are the easiest and safest to work with. They are easily trained to come when called, and can be moved around quite easily using only your voice and presence. This is better for the sheep, too, as it stresses them less than a herding dog would.

Sheep are very predictable animals, and once you learn their particular idiosyncrasies you can make them do almost anything. One example of this is that because sheep do not see very well, a shadow on the ground can be mistaken for a ditch or a stream. Using shadows, then (cast by sheets thrown over the fence) is a handy way of being able to influence which path a sheep will take. Sheep also move away from darkness and toward light, away from movements or noises, toward other sheep, and tend to bunch up in corners. Understanding these and other tendencies can make working with sheep a relatively simple task.

Sheep are another grazing animal, so their food is easy to come by in any season. They will fatten on grass

alone, and have one of the lowest nutrition requirements of all domestic ruminants. Sheep are easily contained, very quiet, gentle enough to be worked by older children, have minimal care requirements, and do not jump, climb, dig, tear, or chew their way out of pens like their Caprine cousins (goats) do.

Nowhere else in livestock will you find a greater diversity among breeds than in sheep. There are breeds that have no wool at all—only short hair, and breeds with wool so long it drags on the ground. There are sheep which produce dairy-quality milk in abundance, sheep which produce whole litters of lambs rather than singles or twins. There are stupid sheep, clever sheep, tiny sheep (60 lbs.) and tremendous sheep (300 lbs.), and the list goes on and on. With such mind-bending diversity available in this lone animal, there is undoubtedly a breed suited to your personal needs and preferences.

One note of caution: If you have a lot of potential hazards on your property that can't be fixed, don't pick a stupid sheep. A primitive breed (Mouflon, Romanov, Jacobs, etc.) will be better able to figure their way out of a problem situation. Case in point: I've had many commercial meat breeds manage to get their heads irreversibly stuck in the fence mesh, but never have had a primitive breed do this. Something to consider.

If you have decided to go with sheep, you won't need to buy a lot of special equipment for them. They appreciate a roof over their heads from time to time, but can also find decent shelter in a grove of trees. An assortment of small pens or portable panels are handy for moving and working with sheep, and for providing newborns with a private place to get to know mom for the first few days. Young lambs should have some place to get out of heavy rain, and newborns require a draft-free area in winter months. It is nice to have some bottles and feeding tubes around for weak or excess lambs. Milk replacer that is

specifically formulated for sheep is a wonderful and worthwhile convenience, but not essential as you can always milk your ewes or other dairy animals.

Sheep are great wasters of hay if it is not kept up off the ground, so you'll want some type of hay feeder. Do NOT use hay nets for this purpose, as they are like magnets to lambs with suicidal tendencies. You'll want some iodine for the lambs' navels, a castration device for your ram lambs (not essential, but makes management much simpler), and some goat-style hoof trimmers. Like other hoofed stock, sheep need loose minerals available to them at all times. Many people keep some corn or other grain on hand for lactating ewes, although if your pasture is good and you breed late (Dec/Jan) this is not essential.

**Goats:** Whenever the word "homestead" gets mentioned, people think of dairy goats. And rightly so. Although a tad more difficult to manage and offering a bit less in product diversity than sheep, goats are still the most popular of all homestead hoofstock. Their inquisitive and comical personalities probably are what gained them this position, but their wonderful production qualities are what has kept them there.

While goats do provide most of the same products as sheep (meat, milk, leather, bone, horn, fiber, strength), they are best known for their milk. Despite its reputation, when properly handled, goat milk tastes just like cow's milk and most people can't tell the difference. That gamey, sour tasting stuff you buy in the store should not be confused with normal, home-grown goat milk. The store bought milk is processed differently, and often comes from goats bred for making cheese, since they generally have the highest production efficiency. The natural "tang" from a cheese-bred goat is not a flavor that most people prefer in their table milk, but the larger dairies go with what is the most profitable for them.

Many people reject the idea of dairy goats for their homestead because either they are allergic to milk, don't like the idea of being tied down to milking every day, or don't feel they could ever use the sheer quantity of milk that comes along with keeping your own dairy animal. Let me start by saying that goats are useful for things other than just producing milk meat. For one thing, goats are terrific at clearing brush. They will eat bushes, trees, weeds, sticks, poison oak, thistles, and anything else that gets in their way, but will not damage the grass. Many people buy goats just for clearing pastures. Goats are also very strong and easy to train. They can carry moderate loads on their backs and will also learn to pull carts and wagons. In the old days, people sometimes rode to town to do errands in their goat carts, and today many people use goats as pack animals. Photography buffs appreciate that wild deer can often be approached without frightening when accompanied by a goat. Goats also make wonderful companion animals, and will befriend a lonely horse (or anything else), and make excellent pets for children. Many goats will "adopt" other animals, and so can be used to raise orphaned lambs, calves, foals, and other livestock. These "orphaned" animals can often be gotten for free (or very little) from livestock auctions and farmers, so having a nanny goat around can be quite profitable. Long-haired goats provide the finest quality fiber for spinning and making into clothes (cashmere & angora are both produced by goats), and buck goats will fight off coyotes, within reason. Like all livestock, goats provide fertilizer for the garden, and let's not forget the most important thing goats can produce—baby goats!

As far as the objection due to a milk allergy goes, people who are allergic to milk & dairy products usually are not bothered at all by goat milk or goat's milk products. In fact, most of the people who own dairy goats got

started because they (or a family member) were allergic to milk. If you have an infant who is allergic to breast milk, cows milk, or is having trouble with formula, try goat's milk. It often provides a nutritious and inexpensive solution.

To answer the concern about having too much milk, I will tell you that everyone who owns a dairy animal thought this at one time. However, once you discover all the uses there are for milk, the problem becomes never having *enough*! That's one reason most goat owners end up buying several more goats. Goat milk is not just used for drinking. When you have an abundant quantity, you find that milk is handy for making soaps, cosmetics, and durable paints, great for removing stubborn odors from clothes (use it in your pre-wash), can dramatically cut the cost of feeding other homestead pets and livestock (milk-fed chickens taste superb), and the list goes on and on. Also it takes a lot more milk than you might think to make cheese. Depending on the type of cheese desired, it can take as much as two gallons of fresh milk to produce just one cup of cheese. Milk is also a great commodity for bartering. Once your friends and neighbors discover how delicious and healthy fresh goat milk can be, they will be calling you for a supply. Homegrown goat's milk usually sells for around \$5 a gallon these days, so extra milk can also provide a side income. In many places, pasteurization is required by law before milk can be sold to the public for drinking. It is simple enough to pasteurize the milk yourself (just heat it to 190 degrees), but most of your customers will want the milk left raw as it is much healthier for humans in its natural state. In this situation, simply label your milk "for pet use only" and don't ask questions about how they intend to use it.

Processing your milk into cheese is not as difficult or time consuming as people think. In fact, the part that takes the longest is letting it sit undis-

turbed. The actual work involved in cheesemaking only lasts for a few minutes at a time. The type and taste of the cheese depends on which culture you use, how you season it (salt, herbs, etc.), how long you let it sit, and whether or not you "age" it (leave it in the root cellar).

The setup for making cheese and other products does not require any major expense for equipment. While home dairying is a little bit easier with the proper tools and supplies, the things you already have laying around your house can make do—and pretty well, at that. Old plastic pitchers make satisfactory milking buckets, Clorox disinfects almost as well as dairy cleanser, garden shears make excellent hoof trimmers, coffee filters or cloth can be used to strain milk, and the most popular cheese press is still made out of a coffee can fitted with a wooden disk. If you want to be really proper and use all stainless steel or glass, your kitchen pots and pans, mixing bowls, and spoons and forks can do most everything necessary. The only item that is truly essential is a good dairy thermometer. If I were to suggest one more item to purchase for the home dairy, it would be a proper milk strainer with a supply of disposable filters.

Despite all the benefits a dairy goat provides, many people still rule them out because they don't want to be tied down to the chore of milking every day. While it is true that a doe in full lactation does need to be milked once or twice daily, there are creative ways of accommodating this that do not involve *you*. Personally, I always try to keep around some nursing lambs, puppies, kids, calves, etc. who can take over the chore if I'm not going to be home. This requires an obliging goat of course, but they are not too hard to train. The best breeds for accepting stray infants seem to be Toggenburgs, LaManchas, and Angoras. Neighbors and other goat keepers are surprisingly willing helpers, too, since they usually are

happy to do the milking occasionally in exchange for the milk they receive. Another factor is that dairy goats do not always need to be milked regularly. How the goat regulates her production is up to you. You can keep a goat in production all year, or just for a few months, or not at all. And the amount of milk she gives can also be regulated according to your personal needs by varying your feeding program or the time period between milkings.

If you are planning on customizing your goat's milk production, I would recommend choosing an individual from one of the Swiss breeds who was bred for a long lactation cycle, and avoiding Nubians altogether. Nubians are very sensitive to changes in their upkeep and will tend to dry up on you if they are tampered with too radically, whereas a goat bred to have a long lactation cycle is often difficult to dry up, even if trying. It is this quality that makes a goat more agreeable to changes in their production output.

Goats are famous for getting out of pens and that reputation is well earned, but you can keep them confined quite easily if you simply realize that: (a) goats love to climb, (b) goats love to jump, (c) goats love to squeeze under things, and (d) goats love to eat most common building materials. This may make keeping goats confined sound like a difficult task, but problems only arise when people don't consider their goats natural "Houdini" talents. Very effective pens can be built out of woven wire, chain link, solid wood, picket type fencing, or horse panels. The best goat pen I ever had was built out of old wooden pallets that I got for free. Most goats will stay in a three and a half foot fence, and all goats will bother your fence less if they have plenty of room, and something fun to climb on inside the pen, such as a wooden spool, some logs, or an old truck tire. If you're still worried about fencing, you might consider one of the breeds with less of an inclination to escape, such as Toggenburgs.

Goats do require more protein in their diet than sheep or other ruminants, so you will need to keep them on a comparatively rich diet. Alfalfa or clover hay, leafy brush, and legumes such as soybeans work fine for this. Grain is frequently fed for optimum milk production. Unlike sheep, goats are browsers rather than grazers, meaning that most of their diet consists of the richer foods, such as broad leafed weeds and tree leaves. For this reason, you can not expect a goat to stay content in a pasture filled with grass alone.

**Pigs:** Because of their size, strength, and characteristic odor, pigs are not an animal that I am inclined to recommend as the first choice for a beginner. Better to start with something like rabbits or chickens. But pigs are so practical that I would be cheating you if I did not at least give them a mention. Like chickens, pigs will eat almost anything. God has designed the pig to excel at this, by giving it a physiology that compensates for unorthodox feeding. When fed insufficiently, pigs will be just as healthy, prolific, and content as properly fed pigs—they will just be smaller. Because of this, you can responsibly raise a pig on pretty much whatever you have a surplus of. You can also let them roam free and fatten on your pasture, but this method requires you to fence them out of other areas, such as your garden and chicken coop (they will eat small animals). This ease of feeding, coupled with their large litter size and minimal space requirements are what has made keeping pigs one of the staples of homestead living. Pigs are year-round breeders, who give birth to some 8 to 14 babies per litter, sometimes even more. They provide meat, bone, a tough and versatile hide, and a great quantity of useful fat. Although pigs are capable of inflicting fatal injuries on humans, they are normally very docile and affectionate creatures if raised properly. In fact, pigs (who are highly intelligent) can be trained as beasts of burden, hunting

companions (scent), or reliable guard animals.

Because pigs do not have sweat glands, they must regulate their body temperature by keeping wet during hot weather. Often the only "wet" spot a pig can find is a pool of mud. The resulting necessity of "rolling in the mud" has led to the image of pigs as dirty animals, when in fact they are very clean animals if given access to streams or other renewable sources of water.

Pigs are outrageously strong animals, so strong that they can root your fence posts right out of the ground. This quality makes them very difficult to keep confined. To fence pigs either in or out of an area requires very stout fencing that is solid all the way down to the ground. If they can get their mighty snouts underneath any part of it, they will pull it up and out of their way with a lack of effort that will astonish you. Electric fencing works tolerably well for pigs when it is strung in several levels, beginning close to the ground. Concrete block and steel rail fencing posted in cement are both used frequently. Putting a ring through a pig's nose will solve the problem of digging under fences, but unfortunately will prevent them from foraging food, too. A happy (meaning well-fed) pig is usually content to stay in its pen once it has reached adulthood, so the trouble of confining a pig is at least short-lived.

The only other drawback to keeping pigs is that they are difficult to restrain bodily for vet care or routine management, so some skills in this area will need to be acquired before the beginner can safely handle them. Pigs are also capable of exchanging certain illnesses with humans (they can catch your cold, and visa versa) whereas most other animals are not.

## Practical advice

Well, that concludes my discussion of practical homestead animals. I feel obligated to add a few thoughts on

disease control because the vast quantity of books out there frighten many people with their warnings about disinfecting everything from your cages and pens to your boots and feed tubs. What you need to realize is that the majority of books available on livestock care were written with the large commercial operation in mind, or were based on the information found in such books.

In a homestead situation, you are keeping only a few animals and they are not subjected to the overcrowding, horribly filthy conditions, high turnover, and stresses associated with commercial establishments.

Because of this, you don't need to worry about disinfecting everything your animal comes into contact with any more than you would worry about disinfecting your children's hairbrush and schoolbooks every day, or spraying down the walls of their bedrooms. A healthy animal's immune system will keep them from getting sick from the germs commonly found in their surroundings, and through constant contact will actually build up a resistance to the illnesses.

There are, of course, exceptions. Occasional disinfecting of pens and cages is good management, and specific contagious ailments will sometimes get into your livestock that do need to be carefully controlled and prevented from spreading. These specifics will be addressed in the various livestock books, but for now, simply know that any area that is clean enough for you to be comfortable in is probably clean enough for your animals. If you keep the accumulated poop to a minimum, have fresh food, water, and dry bedding available, and a roomy well-ventilated area for them to live in, you should not need to worry about constant disinfecting.

A word of wisdom: Don't try to get all your animals at once. It takes some time to become proficient in most husbandry skills, and Murphy's law dictates that sometimes everything will go wrong at once. When this happens,

it is best if you are experienced enough with your animals to be able to do things quickly. Speed comes from practice, and so it is best to limit your animal varieties until you have had time to gain some level of proficiency in each one. I have been keeping animals for over 30 years. Once I went on a vacation overseas and left my farm in the care of a young couple who loved animals but had very little experience. I left them a detailed list of my normal routine, and walked them through everything the day before I left. My normal daily livestock chores took me about three hours. After a week in Europe, I phoned home to see how things were going. The young wife told me that she was slaving all day long, and her husband had had to quit his job to help her because there were not enough hours in the day to keep up with everything. For me, this same load had taken three hours. I relate this true story to make a point: People who fill their whole farm with new critters are often unprepared for what can happen when the work load is suddenly shifted because an animal gets sick or injured, or escapes, or gives birth, or some other very common occurrence. Please be kind to your animals and yourself by not biting off more than you may be able to chew. Animal skills are not acquired overnight.

When researching breeds, *do not* overlook the minor breeds. These are the heirloom foundation stock that today's commercial production ani-

mals descended from. As a group, they are much more hardy, and are generally better suited to the needs of a small homestead.

Today's industrial livestock breeds were carefully engineered to deliver the greatest possible production yield in a carefully controlled environment, but in achieving this goal, the natural stamina and vigor had to be sacrificed due to excessive inbreeding. This is one reason why commercial farms of today keep all their animals on maintenance antibiotics. Many of the modern breeds have brittle bones, low fertility, birthing problems, poor maternal instincts, respiratory and organ weakness, poor foraging ability, and little resistance to diseases and parasites.

The traditional heirloom breeds, however, are the same as they were when our great grandparents depended on them for life. This is why most savvy homesteaders are going back to the minor breeds when choosing livestock. This just might be a good idea for you, too.

For more information, consult the various livestock associations and clubs as well as a number of books, and talk to as many experienced stockman as you can. Since there are as many successful methods for keeping livestock as there are successful livestock keepers, gather an abundance of information and then pick and choose those techniques which are best suited to your lifestyle. **Δ**

### If you enjoyed Amelia Porter's animal advice

you can find more of it in Boston on Surviving Y2K and Other Lovely Disasters from Javelin Press. She wrote chapter 18, a 44-page guide on choosing livestock for a survival crisis. The book has been cited by reviewers as the best disaster preparedness book on the market, exhaustively covering everything from generators to dental health in an informative yet engaging style. The author provides thorough research about all of the products and procedures one might need to become entirely self-sufficient. Phone numbers and resource lists are also included. This excellent book retails for \$22, plus \$3 S&H, but you can order a copy directly from Amelia Porter for only \$17, plus \$3 S&H, or two for \$32, plus \$3 S&H, by writing to her at P.O. Box 31M, Ignacio, CO 81137. To get this special price, make checks and money orders (or send cash) to Amelia Porter. No credit cards. Amelia's special discount for *Backwoods Home* readers will allow you to purchase any of the Javelin Press books for \$3 off the retail price when you mention her name and this article. You can visit the Javelin Press website at: [www.javelinpress.com](http://www.javelinpress.com) to learn more about this and other Javelin titles.